



ASSOCIATION OF  
PUBLIC-SAFETY  
COMMUNICATIONS  
OFFICIALS-  
INTERNATIONAL, INC.

EXHIBIT 3  
DATE 1/14/09  
PAGE 31  
**MONTANA CHAPTER**

Susan Bomstad, President  
Montana Chapter APCO  
c/o Missoula 9-1-1  
200 West Broadway  
Missoula, MT 59802  
(406) 531-0772 (cell)  
sbomstad@co.missoula.mt.us

Kimberly Burdick, Natl. Exec. Council Rep.  
Montana Chapter APCO  
c/o Chouteau County Sheriff's Office  
P.O. Box 459  
Fort Benton, MT 59442  
(406) 622-5451 (work)  
kburdick@chouteaucosomt.com

The Public Safety Dispatcher is the life-line between the public and emergency assistance. Public Safety Dispatchers answer multiple emergent and non-emergent telephone lines, send fire and medical responders, and dispatch law enforcement officers under a very specific set of policy guidelines. Many Dispatchers must interact personally at an information desk in addition to all of these duties. The dispatcher must be adept at multi-tasking because these activities are routinely performed simultaneously.

The Dispatcher plays a critical role in the safety of the responders. They keep a steady stream of information flowing between a potentially hazardous incident and fire, medical and law enforcement personnel as they respond to the scene so they can plan their approach in the safest manner possible.

This often life saving work is wonderfully rewarding, but carries with it the enormous responsibility of making split second decisions in a time critical, error free environment, while being empathetic to citizens that are often in highly emotional, life threatening and distraught situations.

Consequently, this profession has historically been one that experiences high personnel turnover rates and frequent vacancies. Nationally, Dispatcher retention has been a challenge. The Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials-International, Inc. (APCO) studied this issue in Project RETAINS. The project committee members found that many 9-1-1 and Public Safety Communications personnel leave the job after only a few years of service often because they realize that given the stressful and demanding nature of the job they can not reasonably expect to stay in the job long enough to retire. It is costly to hire and train their replacement. There is added risk to responders and liability to the dispatch center when the Dispatcher lacks experience or when the dispatch center is understaffed. According to the study:

"To address this dimension of the staffing recruitment and retention issue requires that -

- Length of service time for retirement be reviewed in relation to the physical and emotional demands of work in a 9-1-1/PSCC (public safety communication center).
- Retirement benefits should provide direct incentives to the recruitment and retention of communications center personnel.
- Retirement benefits should not substantially differ from that of Law Enforcement, Fire/Rescue and EMS personnel."

HB31 provides for Montana's Public Safety Dispatchers to join the Sheriffs' Retirement System, which offers 20 year retirement. Most of the Dispatchers in Montana are members of the Public Employees' Retirement System, which requires 30 years service to full retirement.

HB31 will benefit the dispatchers and the public safety community in several ways.

1. Public safety dispatching as a profession  
A 20 year retirement will attract applicants who would choose public safety as a career, rather than just an interim job that was among a limited list of available job postings.
2. Employee retention / experience  
A 20 year retirement will encourage current employees to remain in their position. After a few years, or at the 5 year mark at which the employee is vested in PERS, they typically reassess their ability to stay in such a stressful environment until retirement. Another aspect to consider is liability. There is added risk to responders and liability to the dispatch center when the dispatcher lacks experience or when the dispatch center is understaffed.
3. Sustained performance  
Some dispatchers' skills deteriorate after many years, or they simply burn out from the demands of the job. This will give those dispatchers the opportunity to retire at 20 years before they are "spent".

Public Safety Dispatchers in some other states (for example, Texas and Wyoming) have 20 year retirement.

Moving to the Sheriffs' Retirement System will require additional contributions from the employer and from the employee, but the employer costs will be balanced somewhat by diminished turnover costs. Retention of fully trained, experienced employees will also reduce liability.

**HIRING / TRAINING COSTS FOR DISPATCHER TRAINEES AT THE MISSOULA 9-1-1 CENTER**

Classified advertisement in Missoula / surrounding areas / internet			\$	500.00
Numbers test (1 employee @ 3 hours)	3	\$	20.65	\$ 61.95
Critical test (1 employee @ 8 hours)	8	\$	20.65	\$ 165.20
Panel interview (3 employees @ 12 hours each)	36	\$	20.65	\$ 743.40
Drug screening			\$	35.00
Hearing test			\$	15.00

<b>TOTAL HIRING COSTS</b>			<b>\$</b>	<b>1,520.55</b>
---------------------------	--	--	-----------	-----------------

These figures reflect "bare bones" expenses for hiring and training 9-1-1 Dispatchers. The Human Resources Office incurs costs for counseling, screening and scheduling applicants, and arranges for background checks on all new hires. The Sheriff's Office performs backgrounds checks on all new hires.

**5 WEEKS CLASSROOM TRAINING**

Entry level wage for trainee	200	\$	13.10	\$	2,620.00
Trainer's wages for 4 weeks	160	\$	21.71	\$	3,473.60
Emergency Medical Dispatch trainer's median wage for 1 week	40	\$	19.13	\$	765.20
EMD certification fee				\$	72.00

**9 WEEKS TRAINING MAIN PHONES AND FIRE/MEDICAL POSITION**

Entry level wage for trainee	360	\$	13.10	\$	4,716.00
Trainers \$1/hr training stipend	360	\$	1.00	\$	360.00

**3 WEEKS TRAINING AT THE SHERIFF'S OFFICE RADIO POSITION**

Overtime for replacement for trainee in the schedule	120	\$	30.97	\$	3,716.40
Trainers \$1/hr training stipend	120	\$	1.00	\$	120.00

**2 WEEKS TRAINING AT THE CITY POLICE RADIO POSITION**

Overtime for replacement for trainee in the schedule	80	\$	30.97	\$	2,477.60
Trainers \$1/hr training stipend	80	\$	1.00	\$	80.00

**1 WEEK AT THE MONTANA STATE LAW ENFORCEMENT ACADEMY**

Entry level wage for trainee	40	\$	13.10	\$	524.00
Overtime for replacement for trainee in the schedule	40	\$	30.97	\$	1,238.80
Mileage for county vehicle to Helena (250 miles x .585 per mile)				\$	146.25
Tuition, lodging and meals				\$	230.00

<b>TOTAL TRAINING COSTS</b>	<b>1520</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>176.05</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>20,539.85</b>
-----------------------------	-------------	-----------	---------------	-----------	------------------

Training costs indicated here are conservative. Totals do not include ride-alongs with law enforcement or extension of training period when appropriate.

Median wage of all dispatchers	\$	20.65	Overtime median wage	30.97
Entry level wage for trainee	\$	13.10		

Prepared September 2008 by:

Susan Bomstad, Assistant Manager  
Missoula 911 Center  
200 West Broadway  
Missoula, MT 59802  
(406) 258-4468 (office)  
(406) 531-0772 (cell)  
sbomstad@co.missoula.mt.us

Regarding House Bill 31



**ASSOCIATION OF  
PUBLIC-SAFETY  
COMMUNICATIONS  
OFFICIALS-  
INTERNATIONAL, INC.**

# **MONTANA CHAPTER**

How much more per year will HB31 (20 year retirement for Public Safety Dispatchers) cost the employer?

**Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS)**

Employer pays 7.035%

Member pays 6.9%

**Sheriffs Retirement System (SRS)**

Employer pays 10.115%

Member pays 9.245%

(Effective July 1, 2009, employer contributions increase to 10.115%)

Dispatcher's hourly wage	Hours worked per year	Increase in Employer Contr 10.115%-7.035%	Total additional employer cost per year
\$9.00	2080	0.0308	\$576.58
\$9.50	2080	0.0308	\$608.61
\$10.00	2080	0.0308	\$640.64
\$10.50	2080	0.0308	\$672.67
\$11.00	2080	0.0308	\$704.70
\$11.50	2080	0.0308	\$736.74
\$12.00	2080	0.0308	\$768.77
\$12.50	2080	0.0308	\$800.80
\$13.00	2080	0.0308	\$832.83
\$13.50	2080	0.0308	\$864.86
\$14.00	2080	0.0308	\$896.90
\$14.50	2080	0.0308	\$928.93
\$15.00	2080	0.0308	\$960.96
\$15.50	2080	0.0308	\$992.99
\$16.00	2080	0.0308	\$1,025.02
\$16.50	2080	0.0308	\$1,057.06
\$17.00	2080	0.0308	\$1,089.09
\$17.50	2080	0.0308	\$1,121.12
\$18.00	2080	0.0308	\$1,153.15
\$18.50	2080	0.0308	\$1,185.18
\$19.00	2080	0.0308	\$1,217.22

Compiled by:

Susan Bomstad, President

Montana Chapter of Association of Public Safety Communication Officials, Intl.

c/o Missoula 9-1-1

200 West Broadway

Missoula, MT 59802

(406) 258-4468 (office)

(406) 531-0772 (cell)

sbomstad@co.missoula.mt.us

Jan-09